

The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, September 9. 1693.

Quest. 1. **A** Friend of mine often importun'd me to make my Addresses to a Lady, Young, Beautifull and Witty, assuring me that if so be I should approve of her, it lay in his Power to procure her Consent to Marry me; I readily Consented, and accordingly made her a Visit, was received with abundance of Respect; when I left her, she was pleas'd to own to my Friend that introduced me, I every way answer'd the Character he had given me, and that she thought me a Person very agreeable, and that for his sake she would allow me the Privilege to wait on her, which I have often done with the same Success, 'till lately without any Provocation she has Banish'd me her Presence, upon Pain of her utmost Displeasure. I have since reflected on every Action that might give Offence, but find my self Innocent of any Thought, much less Act, that might occasion this harsh Usage, 'till lately I find she is in Love with my Friend, and so to Oblige him allowed my Visits; a very Imprudent Way, for by her seeming Kindness she has undone me: For to be plain, *I am desperately in Love with her, she as much with my Friend; I Court her, she Solicits him, tho' both equally successless, for he to my knowledge Loaths her as much as I Love her: I know not how to behave my self in this Intricate Business, your speedy Advice will Oblige a poor Despairing Lover?*

Ans. Now the Mischiefe is, that such Desperate Lovers as you, if you go on at the same rate as you have begun, can't be less than Hang'd or Drown'd between your Question and our Answer — But if you are yet on *Terra firma*, this is our Advice — If the Lady is resolute against seeing you, it may be better to absent your self for a while, than to Exasperate her by your Presence, but withall taking Care to let her know 'tis in Obedience to her severe Commands that you put such an extream Violence on your Inclinations — (and all that, as you'll find it in the *Academy*;) In the mean while she has not forbidden you Writing to her, tho' she has Seeing her, therefore be sure ply her well with Letters, (you may have Choice in *Carr's* Letter-Book, or the *Pacquet broke open*.) And if you can, get some Friend of hers, that's near her, to espouse your Cause, for then she's *half yours*. At the same time prevail with the Gentleman who brought you into these sad Circumstances, plainly to let the Lady know he can't Love her, nay rather than fail, to *Affront* her; tell her her Breath stinks, that she's ugly, and if that don't do, she's incurable; but if this works, then strike you while the Iron's hot, and be the humblest, doting, whining Spaniel-thing that ever lay on a Lady's Petticoats, bating the Jest, practise the main of our Advice, and this way, if any, the Lady may chance to love you, and make you unhappy.

Quest. 2. *Gentlemen*, There is a Publick House hard by me, which I do generally use every Night for an hour or two to pass the time away, which is the last thing as I do; but the inconvenience as I find in using this House, is no small trouble to me, yet I am so bewitched to this House, that I cannot forbear going to it, tho' I meet with the greatest inconvenience imaginable, for there I hear a great deal of Wickedness, Swearing, and unseemly Talk, and the like, tho' the first I am not guilty of, but the latter I cannot forbear, tho' I make promises before to the contrary, I am so strangely overtaken, tho' I do not swear, yet my talk is as filthy and unseemly as their's to the full; he that keeps the House is reckoned to be a great Professor, therefore I do the more wonder at it, that he should suffer such discourse in his House. *Gentlemen*, I am afraid I have been too tedious, but that which I earnestly desire of you,

is, as you'd deal ingeniously by me as my Case requires, for I am much troubled as I cannot conquer this troublesome humour, I desire to know whether I do not greatly sin in so doing, and whether it is not a breach of any of Gods Commands; and if so, how to avoid it. *Gentlemen*, I hope you will grant me such an Answer as may be satisfactory to this your poor Querist? &c.

Ans. The honesty of this poor Man's Intentions, and the usefulness of the Question makes us Answer it, tho' but meanly worded. Our Judgment is, That 'tis a Crime in the Master of the House, if he encourages such Discourse, or does not all he can to prevent it, tho' that may hardly now be possible, considering the present state of the World. However, that you can neither be present at such Discourse, nor much less a sharer in it, without a Sin, such sort of Conversation being plainly forbidden (under *filibines*, *foolish talking* and *jesting*) in the Holy Scriptures, which require the greatest Purity of words, as well as of Heart and Life: If therefore you find you can't avoid this Inconvenience at that House, you are indispensibly Oblig'd to leave it, as you wou'd a Pest-house, or one just going to fall on your head, tho' indeed the time you stay there every Night is too long to be employ'd in such Houses, since you might make better use of it, and spend the Evenings in Exercises of Devotion, which wou'd be both more honourable and comfortable than your present practice.

Quest. 3. *A Young Woman has been for some time Courted very passionately by one for whom she has a very favourable Opinion, all the Objection she has against him being, that she doubts he's ill-humour'd — she has try'd him several ways, but he's too politick to discover himself, and therefore desires you'd put her in a method how she may find out the Truth, in a matter which so nearly concerns the happiness of her Life?*

Ans. A very knotty business this, and We can't very well tell whether there's above one infallible way to clear it — Marry him, and we'll venture our whole next 4 d. Treat that you know what Humour he's of in less than half a Year after, as well as he may be by that time pretty well acquainted with yours: But if you think that a desperate Remedy, we'll Advise you to make tryal of some others — Break his *Shins*, Tune his *Elbows*, Tread upon his *Corns*; or if you han't the Heart to do this, make an *Assignment*, let him provide a Treat, &c. and never come near him, appoint the *Wedding-day*, and put it off again. But if these *Potions* are still too strong, enquire of his long and familiar Acquaintance. Observe how he behaves himself to his *Inferiors*, how he looks when he loses at *Play*, and not to you. By some of these Artifices you'll scarce fail to uncase him, but if he happen to see this Mercury, look to your self, lest you catch a *Tartar*, and he discover your Humour, rather than you his.

Quest. 4. About a Year since I Observed the strict Rules of the Protestant Religion, but lately being moved by the Instigation of the Devil and his wicked Adherents here on Earth, I became absolutely void of all Goodness, and wholly addicted to all Debauchery, and the only Motives that induc'd me to hearken to their wicked Insinuations are these. First, When I lived up to strict Observances of the Christian Religion, I was very dull and heavy, and found my self very

ry unactive, insomuch that I thought if I did encourage my Solitude and Melancholliness, I might involve my self into a Despairing Condition. Secondly, When I was seventeen Years old, I was very Merry and lively, and fit for all Actions, so (Gentlemen) considering these two Conditions, and the Consequences that might attend my Melancholly, I very fairly revolted from Goodness to Badness, and so by Degrees I became Vicious in the superlative Degree.

Now, Gentlemen, I desire you to Resolve me, Whether you believe my Repentance will be accepted of?

And Secondly, I desire you to prescribe, what Methods I must take for to Evade the Excess of Melancholly and the Excess of Mirth?

Pray, Gentlemen, don't fail answering my Questions in your next *Mercury*, for I shall be very impatient 'till I have your Resolution in this matter.

Ans. to the first Question.] There's no doubt but *At whatever time a Sinner repents and forsakes his sin, he shall find Mercy*—tho' he fools himself egregiously if he ever expects it without Repentance.

To the second—True, constant, unaffected Devotion, will keep you from the extremes of Melancholly, and mad Mirth, the best of any thing in the World. If you need particular Arguments, when you find your self too Merry, reflect on your Apostacy from Virtue, and your bad Life—If sunk in Melancholly, reflect on that Joy which will be in Heaven on your true Repentance.

Quest. 5. When a Person one dearly Loves is marry'd to another, whether it's a sign of greater Affection to Love or Hate 'em, desiring accordingly, and endeavouring to promote their Happiness or Infelicity?

Ans. The Question is worded so, that We can't tell whether you mean Loving the former Mistress, or the Person she's marry'd to: If the former, 'tis an odd Argument of Affection to desire what you love shou'd be Unhappy, and much such a Token of Love as the Brutish Turk shew'd his fair Mistress, when he Cut her Head off. We suppose therefore you rather mean the Husband—But even there too you know the Proverb, *Love me and Love my, &c.* Their Interests are now but one, and 'tis not easie for the Husband to be Unhappy without the Wives sharing in his Misfortunes. A generous Lover will rather therefore out of a disinterested Esteem endeavour as much as possible to promote even his now Happy Rival's Happiness, since that of the Person he Loves is bound up in it, the contrary to which must be

the Effect of Hatred and a Base Mind, but neither of Generosity nor Love.

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